

Parking Strategy

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Introduction

Vehicle Parking is an integral aspect of most trips, and an important, often emotive issue in the lives of residents. Availability and cost of parking is a major factor in determining the mode of travel, and sometimes the trip destination. Whilst traffic volumes have fluctuated over the past 10 years, the private car remains the dominant form of travel for the majority of UK residents, for both work and leisure. Bracknell Forest is no exception to that trend

One of the Council's key Local Transport Plan aims is to promote and encourage alternative, more sustainable forms of travel. However, with forecasts suggesting continued growth in car use and traffic, at least for this LTP period, we must also look to provide solutions to accommodate vehicles, particularly as the borough grows.

This document presents Bracknell Forest Council's parking strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2011-2026. It provides a high-level policy position on a number of factors, including the following:

- Overall management and enforcement of public car parking in Bracknell Forest
- Setting of appropriate parking charges
- Visitor attraction parking
- Cycle parking
- Electric Vehicle Parking
- Safety and mobility impaired requirements
- Management and provision of parking in residential estates

Car parking standards for proposed developments are explored in more detail in the **Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**. This specifies the number, size and specification of parking spaces that the council will generally expect in new development.

Background

Bracknell Forest has a growing population of over 115,000. Thirty miles from London within the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise area, Bracknell is economically successful, home to many international companies and organisations including Fujitsu, Honda, 3M, Dell, HP and Waitrose.

The Borough has high levels of employment and relative affluence. As a result, many houses are larger and more contemporary than some of the surrounding and more historic Boroughs. Add to this a relatively modern and efficient highway network between the M3 and M4 motorways, and it is perhaps not surprising that car ownership and car commuting levels are high, with resulting demand for parking.

The availability of car parking will make a significant contribution to the successful regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre. It also continues to influence the success of Crowthorne and Sandhurst. However, it is essential that parking is controlled, both in terms of numbers and price, to ensure the vitality of Bracknell's towns and villages, and a continued sustainable modal split with public transport, walking and cycling.

At the other end of the scale, parking is a matter of concern to many residents with parking problems on their street. The latest census data suggests that the number of households without a car continues to fall, whilst those with more than one car is increasing.

Many streets, properties, communities and businesses were not designed to cater for the number of vehicles that modern households own. Whilst in some circumstances, it is possible for property owners to add off-street parking, vehicles are increasingly being parked on street, causing concerns about access, and other wider social issues. The council has to consider this in setting policies for both existing and new development, where pressure to build densely on available land is often high.

Bracknell Forest is expected to grow rapidly over the next ten years, with thousands of houses being constructed along with new schools, shops, facilities and services. It is essential that as the borough grows, so does the transport infrastructure and choice available to residents, commuters and visitors alike.

National, Regional and Local Policy

Traffic Management Act 2004

The Traffic Management Act imposes a duty on Local Authorities to manage their network so as to reduce congestion and disruption and to appoint a Traffic Manager. The Act also provides additional powers in relation to parking, including increased scope to take over the enforcement of movement and parking offences from the police.

Government Operational Guidance on Parking Policy and Enforcement¹ states that parking policies need to be integral to a Local Authority's transport strategy, and should cover enforcement along with on- and off-street parking that is linked to local objectives and circumstances.

Parking policy needs to take account of planning policies and transport powers and consider the needs of the many and various road users in the area, the appropriate scale and type of provision, the balance between short and long term provision and the level of charges.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the role that transport policies can have in terms of promoting sustainable transport, and considers parking specifically. It states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the accessibility of the development;
- the type, mix and use of development;
- the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- local car ownership levels; and
- an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

The NPPF states 'Local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres. Parking enforcement should be proportionate.

Regional Policy

The policies and approaches of the Local Authorities across Berkshire and the wider South East / Thames Valley tend to vary depending on the nature of the key settlements within them, local objectives and circumstances. Reading Borough for example, is dominated by Reading town itself, which faces considerably more pressure on its urban road network than a modern 'new town' like Bracknell. Similarly, Wokingham has a core street network which is relatively historic in nature, influencing the council's own respective approach to parking.

¹ Traffic Management Act 2004 – *Operational Guidance to Local Authorities: Parking Policy and Enforcement*
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416617/operational-guidance.pdf

Bracknell town centre has not faced the same level of parking problems in the past as the main towns of other regional authorities, having had significant parking provision built-in over the development life of the town. However, the newly opened town centre redevelopment will add significant volumes of traffic to the Borough's roads, and change the traffic patterns on those roads. Some of the Borough's more historic towns and villages do already face pressures, as do many residential streets, even on relatively modern housing estates.

For these reasons, most local authorities do not have a 'one-size fits all' policy to parking. Each planning development, application or parking request is assessed individually, on its own merits and circumstances, considering factors such as location, proximity to public transport, practicality and safety.

Local Policy

The Bracknell Forest Local Transport Plan covers the period 2011 to 2026, and sets out a long term strategy for the development of transport in the borough. Over the LTP period, Bracknell Forest Council is regenerating Bracknell town centre, as well as planning to deliver employment space to create more sustainably located jobs, and meet the target to deliver a significant number of new dwellings.

LTP3 Policy TP16 deals specifically with parking, and sets out a number of key objectives which this strategy aims to explore further.

LTP3 Policy TP16 – Parking states that the Council will continue to facilitate the provision of parking in the Borough through:

The use of Development Management to bring about appropriate parking provision in all forms of new development and redevelopment within an overall Parking Strategy

Improving the provision, quality, convenience and security of public parking facilities for cycles

Improving the quality, security and convenience of public car parks

Managing car parking to support sustainable local facilities

Promoting dedicated parking bays with recharging points for electric vehicles

The Parking Strategy, which sets out council provision of on street parking within the borough, provision of public parking areas and the role of enforcement within those provisions.

Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document

Bracknell Forest Council sets specific Parking Standards for new developments, to provide guidance and consistency in planning. These are contained within the Parking Standards SPD which forms part of the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy.

The SPD is a key document which considers parking in more specific detail than the strategy, for example setting out the numbers of spaces expected in various types of development, size of spaces, layout of spaces, provision for alternative modes (cycling) and technologies (electric charging points).

When developing policies and assessing parking cases, the type of parking is generally split in to two categories: residential parking (at homes and flats), and non-residential parking (everywhere else – shops, hotels, attractions, workplaces – i.e. commercial).

The SPD can be found on the council's website at: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/parkingstandardsspd> (Adopted 1 July 2016).

Challenges

Weighing up the situation – SWOT analysis of parking in Bracknell Forest at a glance

Strengths • Availability of parking (in Bracknell itself) relatively good, given the modern, planned nature of the town • Parking provision in the town centre is increasing as part of the regeneration works (new car park, and improvements to existing car parks) • Excellent opportunities to travel using sustainable transport methods, reducing parking demands (e.g. foot and cycle paths), particularly shorter distances • Civil parking enforcement • Number of off-street car parks – high quality, safe and accessible • Adopted Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document will ensure consistent and efficient parking in developments	Weaknesses • Amount of available car parking creates an unattractive visual environment, and encourages car use / discourages use of sustainable modes (requires careful balance in form of reasonable £ charging) • Many residents have more vehicles than can be accommodated off-street, resulting in on-street parking problems • Some businesses do not have sufficient staff parking, whilst town centre charging results in motorists parking on nearby 'free' residential streets • Restricted in parking improvements in existing residential streets by available land and budgets. • Under-utilisation of garage blocks in residential areas
Opportunities • New development • New policies (SPD) • New technology – electric vehicles, charging points • Sustainable transport – increasing popularity of cycling for example, building on the existing network • Increasing available parking in residential areas • Expanding residents parking scheme to protect areas with kerb-side parking conflicts • Redevelopment of old garage blocks • ITS / VMS system for parking availability • Partnership working with Bracknell Forest Homes	Threats • Continued increases in household car ownership • Reduced funding to implement parking schemes • Increase in commercial vehicle ownership • Private car parks offering alternative pricing regimes

Considering the weaknesses and threats identified above, and in the context of the strengths and opportunities, it is worth exploring the main causes in more detail. These particular

challenges will help us to identify where best to prioritise and invest as part of the Parking Strategy Action Plan;

Challenge 1 – Car ownership and use

Challenge 2 – Business and Commercial Growth

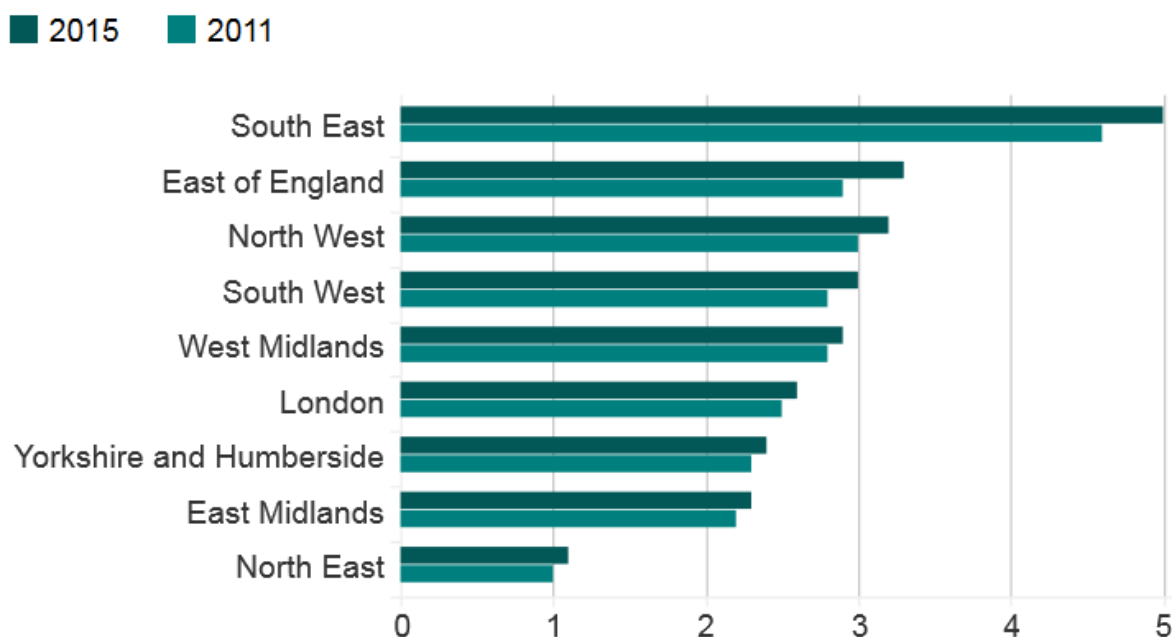
Challenge 3 – Funding

Challenge 1 - Car ownership and use

The main challenge in dealing with parking issues is simply the number of vehicles that are on the road today – over 35 million in the UK in 2014, of which 83% are cars.

DfT data suggests that between 2010 and 2015, the number of cars registered in England increased by 1.6 million, with the largest rise in the South-East at 373,200 cars.

Figure 1: Number of cars (millions) per region in England (source DfT)

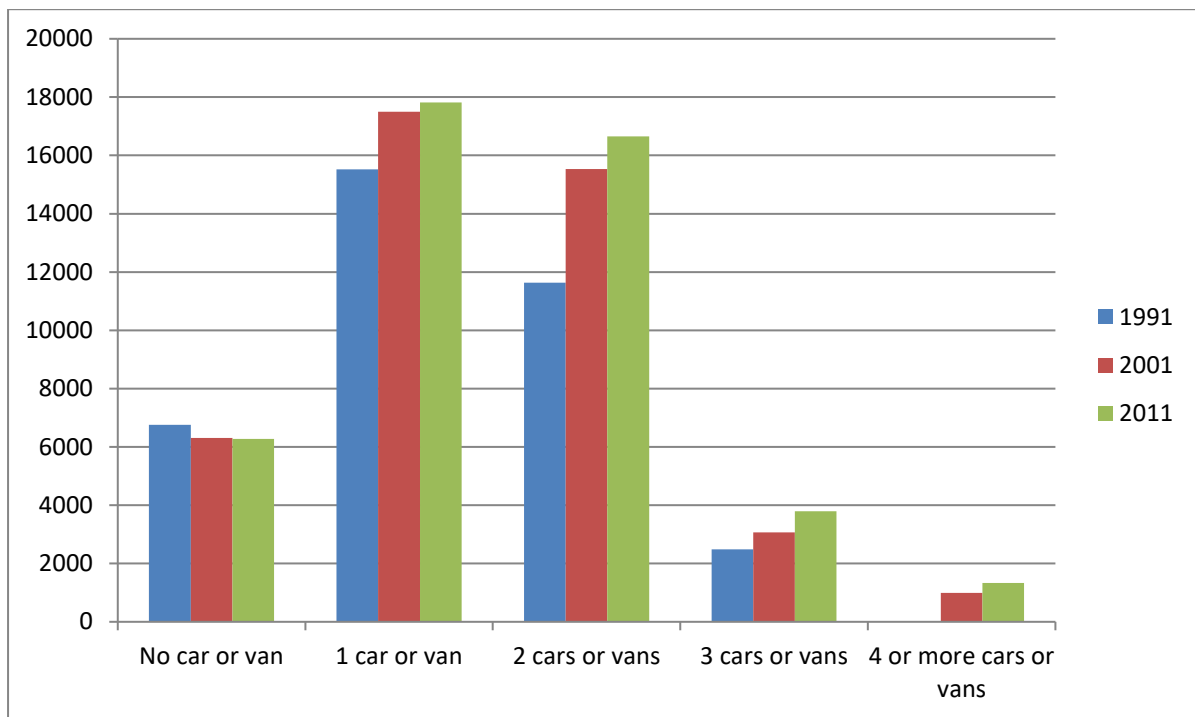


Problems exist in both residential and commercial areas, and external socio-economic and demographic factors are increasingly compounding existing problems, or creating new ones. The council receives numerous complaints or queries relating to parking every week.

Between 1991 and 2011, the number of households in Bracknell Forest with 3 cars or vans increased by 52% to 3794. In the 2001 census, a further category was added for '4 or more cars or vans'. Between 2001 and 2011, this figure increased by 34% in itself, to 1335, as **Table 1** shows. The number of households without a car or van also continues to fall.

Table 1: Household car ownership in Bracknell Forest 1991 – 2011

Year	No car or van	1 car or van	2 cars or vans	3 cars or vans	4 or more cars or vans
1991	6761	15523	11638	2489	N/A
2001	6307	17497	15529	3065	994
2011	6275	17818	16656	3794	1335



Statistics obtained through a Council survey of residents in new developments back up the Census data. In September 2014, residents were asked about car ownership and general satisfaction with parking. This found that 90% of households have 1 or more cars. 37% have 1 car, 47% have 2, and 6% have 3 or more; while only 9% are without any car or van. 60% of respondents said that there is not adequate parking for their needs.

The significant increase in car ownership since the majority of the neighbourhoods and estates in the Borough were built has resulted in many streets not having sufficient parking for current needs. A lack of adequate parking can result in local tensions, neighbour disputes and unsatisfactory parking on verges and open space areas which can be unsightly and introduce significant maintenance requirements. This can erode quality of life and cause inconvenience for residents.

In some neighbourhoods the problems are exacerbated where the original parking solutions such as garages – both individual or blocks, are no longer used for parking, either because it has become impractical, the garages are used for storage, or they are in a state of disrepair. The garage owners then park elsewhere, including on streets which regularly can't meet the parking demands. This can lead to parking in neighbouring streets which simply exasperates the issue through the entire housing estate.

Challenge 2 – Business and Commercial Growth

As the growth of local business continues, the demand for parking from local businesses is likely to increase. It is therefore important to determine an appropriate way forward that provides the flexibility for businesses to allow growth without compromising relevant transport and planning policies.

A balanced approach, providing access by all modes, should be achieved while recognising the aims of other policies. For example, providing business parking capacity and ignoring other measures such as public transport, or cycling would simply encourage car use and increase congestion which in turn is detrimental to business growth and other environmental concerns. A balanced solution which includes parking provision, as well as public transport, footway / cycleways and travel planning is necessary to provide an attractive and flexible environment for business to thrive.

Challenge 3 - Funding

Bracknell Forest Council receives hundreds of parking requests, queries and concerns every year, yet the budgets available to deal with them have reduced significantly as a result of public sector funding pressures. Whilst all requests are considered, only schemes with a high priority and identified benefit are likely to be implemented.

Compounding this issue, parking enforcement pressures have increased with the proliferation of parking restrictions in suburban areas and residential streets, as the Borough's settlements have developed from their centres.

Some issues are not practical to be dealt with by measures available to the council, or are simply out of the control of the council. These may fall under the jurisdiction of the police, but many problems are simply a result of the number of cars on the road – something the council has little influence over, short of encouraging travel by more sustainable means.

Opportunities and Objectives

By delivering on the objectives set out earlier in the document, we will address the three key challenges

		CHALLENGES		
		Increasing ownership use	car and Business and commercial growth	Funding
OBJECTIVES	The use of Development Management to bring about appropriate parking provision in all forms of new development and redevelopment within an overall Parking Strategy			
	Improving the provision, quality, convenience and security of public parking facilities for cycles			
	Improving the quality, security and convenience of public car parks			
	Managing car parking to support sustainable local facilities			
	Promoting dedicated parking bays with recharging points for electric vehicles			
	The Parking Strategy, which sets out council provision of on street parking within the borough, provision of public parking areas and the role of enforcement within those provisions.			

Opportunities and Objectives

The use of Development Management to bring about appropriate parking provision in all forms of new development and redevelopment within an overall Parking Strategy

Built development in Bracknell is controlled and managed by the planning department using the policies of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (LDF), and its sub-documents. Parking is specifically dealt with by the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which focuses more on planning criteria than the broader parking matters dealt with by this strategy.

Controlling the amount of parking provided in new business development (private non-residential) and for new housing (residential) has historically been used as a way of seeking to influence both car use and car ownership levels. However, whilst the LDF seeks to allocate new development in the most suitable locations (i.e. close to service centres and / or with good public transport links), it is considered generally unrealistic to seek to influence car ownership levels through parking measures, as the majority of people will still want to own a car for the flexibility it provides.

The Council's 2007 Parking Standards SPD increased requirements from the previous average of 1.5 spaces per new dwelling to reflect the relatively high car ownership levels in the borough. Experience since then, and a consultation and review of parking levels in new development as part of the 2016 updated SPD identified that the use of these standards can still result in parking issues on some new developments. One issue is that garages are often not used for parking but for storage. Another issue can be that parking is located too far from the properties it serves. Both can result in cars being parked on streets rather than on plots or in designated areas where originally intended.

The 2016 Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document makes it clear that parking solutions must be balanced with other considerations;

- Higher parking standards may require more land thus lowering densities of development which in turn will result in more land being required for development
- Increased standards could result in the over-dominance of car parking to the detriment of the street scene including the ability to include meaningful landscaping.
- The need for effective storage solutions within new properties and a design led approach to achieve effective parking solutions for end-users.
- The need for guidance on where there may be flexibility in the application of standards.

It is considered therefore that the focus of the council's parking strategy should be on influencing car use through appropriate parking measures at destinations (e.g. retail, commercial and employment areas) and not seeking to control car ownership levels through overly restrictive residential parking measures which can cause streetscene or safety issues as a result of parking overspill.

However, concern is often expressed that the reduction in parking standards:

- Could discourage businesses from locating or expanding in Bracknell Forest
- Should not encourage perverse incentives for development in out-of-centre locations
- Are generally unrealistic given the lack of suitable sustainable transport alternatives
- Transfer unmet parking demand onto residential streets

Consequently, parking standards need to be considered in a sensitive and flexible way that reflects local circumstances. Given this, an accessibility framework has been developed to determine reductions, or discounts, in recommended maximum non-residential parking standards.

Alternative solutions

In town centre residential developments, particularly commercial buildings which have been converted (following changes in national planning policy), parking provision may be limited, with little scope to increase it. In these circumstances, alternative emerging solutions to parking – or more broadly speaking, personal travel, may be applicable.

Other modes of transport should also be considered more broadly in all new developments, including provision of infrastructure to facilitate travel by foot, bicycle and public transport. This is generally, and increasingly the case, with developer contributions often going towards measures to facilitate alternative travel to the car, which in turn can promote healthier lifestyles.

Car clubs are increasingly popular in cities where resident car ownership is actually decreasing. They effectively allow registered users to rent a car by the hour, usually returning it to where they picked it up from (although some 'point-to-point' services do exist).

Key actions

Apply and enforce policies of the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document, but with flexibility where a local evidence base is appropriate

Require new development to provide at least 20% passive provision for electric charging (i.e. 'cable ready')

Maximise opportunities for alternative travel modes to reduce parking impacts of new developments by ensuring infrastructure is included to facilitate as part of the development

Explore opportunities for car clubs within new developments through the Travel Plan requirement process

Improving the provision, quality, convenience and security of public parking facilities for cycles

The availability of convenient, sheltered and secure cycle parking at the start and end of a journey is a highly important factor in whether cycling can be a viable or attractive choice for a trip. In particular, any effort to encourage someone to take up cycling is going to be highly compromised if they do not have a place to keep a bike conveniently or securely – particularly at home. Therefore it is important that the most popular destinations are identified as to further encourage cycling as an alternative mode of transport.

The Council will work with a range of partners to increase the availability of parking facilities that offer not only a convenient place to leave a bike but also a place where people will feel their bike is not at risk of being stolen, vandalised, or damaged by the weather when left unattended. This is particularly important when it is likely to be longer than for a very short visit.

A key part of delivering this objective will involve the work that the council does with developers, schools and employers in travel planning. The Cycling and Walking strategy considers the value of travel plans and their application in encouraging cycling in more detail.

Key actions

Increase space for bicycles at existing or new higher density residential developments (for instance through the use of on-street cycle hangars);

Improve the availability and quality of cycle parking within town and village centres and amenities

Improve the availability of covered and secure parking at bus and railway stations, schools, centres of further education, leisure complexes, and workplaces

Encourage local employers to provide facilities for those who choose to cycle to work (including changing areas, showers and lockers) in order to maximise cycle parking use

Improving the quality, security and convenience of public car parks

Bracknell Forest Council operates 27 car parks across the borough. The main town centre multi-storey car parks (The Avenue, High Street and Charles Square) have the greatest capacity (1300, 911, and 760 spaces respectively). These are managed and maintained by a third party contractor. The Avenue was opened in 2017, whilst High Street and Charles Square were fully refurbished in 2016 as part of the town centre regeneration project, with improved aesthetics, materials, lighting and toilets.

The town centre multi storey car parks operate 24 hours a day, and are staffed between 7am and 7pm and patrolled regularly to ensure that they are clean and secure. Barrier systems with number plate recognition further improve security, although the car parks remain effectively open to the public as they are directly linked to the town centre, providing easy access particularly for those with a disability or with younger children. Disabled parking spaces and parent with child parking spaces are located in the most accessible locations. Disabled parking facilities are also provided in many other off-street council owned car parks, where there is a demand.

High Street and The Avenue Multi-storeys each have charging facilities for electric vehicles, and the Avenue car park has further provision to cater for potential future growth in electric vehicle use through infrastructure pre-installed at construction (passive provision). At present, charging facilities are free.

As part of the town centre regeneration a Variable Message Signing system (VMS) is now operating to give drivers information about available parking spaces as they approach the town centre.

The remainder of the Council's car parks are located around the Borough, generally at sites where there are leisure opportunities (such as Coral Reef and The Look Out), sporting and recreational facilities, or shopping. All Council owned regulated car parks are patrolled to prevent illegal parking and maximise public safety.

The quality of parking is also important in ensuring the vitality of local community facilities. Central government policy now suggests that all communal parking administered by local authorities should meet the 'Safer Parking' Standards. Those that do are awarded a kite mark or 'Park Mark – Safer Parking' label as shown below. Both Charles Square and High Street multi-storey car parks are Park Mark accredited.



Aspects of this award include:

- Access and movement
- Structure
- Surveillance
- Ownership
- Physical protection
- Activity; and,
- Management and Maintenance

All communal car parks should therefore carry out their function with these issues in mind.

This will also include:

- Taking into account the needs of all of the community
- Ensuring that facilities are convenient, user-friendly and well lit
- Appropriate designs that limit the opportunity for crime and promote natural surveillance
- Clear entrance and exit markings
- Physical security measures such as CCTV

Key actions

Maintain Park Mark accreditation in High Street and Charles Square car parks

Provide disabled and parent & child parking spaces and ensure they are in the most accessible locations

Improve Security at council managed Car Parks through measures such as CCTV, Lighting and ANPR vehicle profiling

Monitor emerging technology to improve user experience associated with payment, access and egress arrangements

Managing parking to support sustainable local facilities

The term 'Local Facilities' encompasses shops, libraries, healthcare (doctors, dentists), and leisure facilities.

Car parking is vital to many local facilities, particularly in areas that are remote or less accessible. In many cases there is a rational need, and a moral obligation to ensure that these car parks are available, to encourage people to use the facilities, and reduce the likelihood of them travelling further unnecessarily. However, this can often result in the car parks being used by local residents or nearby businesses. Limited waiting restrictions (e.g. '1 hour free') can help to address such conflicts, though these are often costly to implement and enforce.

Where appropriate, on-street parking can be managed to some extent in an effort to address problems with local car parks and supplement local needs. It is important to strike a balance between provision for shops and services, and provision for residents. This could be ascertained through surveys and consultation.

Taxi ranks and loading / unloading bays will also be a key consideration around local facilities, particularly if servicing provision is more practical on street. However, it should not be to the detriment of traffic flow or safety. Off-street solutions should always be sought before resorting to on-street measures.

Key actions

Manage the demands of short and long-stay parking needs to support local facilities whilst ensuring that residential streets remain protected

Provide adequate and safe provision for kerbside servicing of local facilities where off-street arrangements are inadequate or absent

Investigate potential for car clubs in Bracknell for use by local residents who do not own a car

Ensure there are suitable, accessible taxi ranks in community areas where they are needed

Promoting dedicated parking bays with recharging points for electric vehicles

Sales of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, a term which includes (but is not exclusive to) pure-electric vehicles have increased dramatically in recent years. Due to the increase in demand for lower emission vehicles through the advancement in technology and decrease in premium for electric vehicles (EV) it is predicted that electric vehicle ownership will continue to increase.

Bracknell Forest Council, along with neighbouring Berkshire Authorities, are closely monitoring the evolution of the Electric and Ultra-Low Emission vehicle market, and the potential opportunities that are available to facilitate its development.

The Council acknowledges the benefits that these vehicles could bring to the Borough, particularly in conjunction with increased use of sustainable alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport. Along with broadly encouraging private domestic charging installations where appropriate, the Council is looking to ensure a level of charging provision is incorporated in all new development. The Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document states that 20% of car parking spaces in new residential or commercial should have 'passive charging provision' installed. This means that the appropriate electrical circuits are in place and ready to be connected to.

New charge points have been installed as part of the town centre regeneration in The Avenue multi-storey car park, whilst the Council has already installed two charge points in the High Street multi-storey car park in 2014.

The Council's role in providing chargers

At the time of writing, evidence suggests that the EV chargers in High Street car park are rarely used, an experience which is mirrored by neighbouring Authorities who have had negative experiences with charge points they have installed. Ongoing maintenance and liability costs are proving to be high compared to the benefits they are providing, which means it is difficult to justify the use of reducing public funds on further sites at this time.

The Council remains interested in the provision of charging facilities, but recognises that its impact is limited in terms of the existing built environment. Equally, there are ways that the private sector can provide them – supermarkets being a key consideration. Waitrose in Bracknell is currently the only supermarket to have charging facilities, and these are used relatively regularly in comparison to Council installed units. A major business on the Southern Business Area has also successfully installed EV chargers, and used them as an opportunity for staff to trial the variety of electric cars currently available.

In summary, the Council's current position is one of acting to encourage and influence the private sector to provide charging facilities for customers, clients and staff, and ensuring that residents are aware of the opportunities and benefits provided by electric vehicles. The Council will also follow closely any opportunities to bid for central Government funding as this will also play a key part in enabling progress in this area.

Key actions

Monitor the usage of current Council and private sector EV chargers to establish changes in demand and any new infrastructure opportunities that emerge

Encourage local residents and businesses to install charge points, and uptake of electric vehicles, making them aware of any Government OLEV funding opportunities as soon as they become available

Require new residential and retail developments to provide readily adaptable EV charging points in accordance with the Parking Standards SPD

Council provision of on street parking within the borough, provision of public parking areas and the role of enforcement within those provisions

This section describes the Council's strategy for dealing with existing local parking problems. It provides information on all the measures currently undertaken to address existing parking problems.

The Council already undertakes a programme of local measures to help resolve existing parking problems. These are listed below and explained further in the following paragraphs:

- Increasing Residential Off-Street Parking;
- Resident Parking Scheme;
- Residential Disabled Persons parking bays;
- On-street parking restrictions;
- Dropped kerbs to off-street parking.

Residential Off-Street Parking Provision

The Council receives many requests each year to create more parking spaces in residential areas to relieve local pressures. Whilst the Council does not have a duty to provide extra parking, it continues to make improvements where it can in residential streets where budgets allow.

A priority list of roads requiring additional parking provision has been in place for some time. Requests are assessed against certain criteria, such as the number of spaces that can be achieved, engineering difficulty, cost and any road safety benefits such as removal of obstruction. However, these requests can be further limited by available green open space, planning permissions and trees, and we cannot build private or allocated parking bays, or provide dropped kerbs (these can be paid for by residents where practical).

The Council also works closely with Bracknell Forest Homes (BFH) to create additional parking on private land within their control. Joint budgets depending, this approach will continue.

Key action

The Council will continue to support residential off-street parking schemes on a priority basis provided they do not have unbalanced adverse impacts upon character, amenity, sustainable drainage, trees, open space or highways safety, and so long as a budget is available.

Verge Parking

Verge parking is a problem faced across the Borough, particularly in (although not limited to) some of the earlier 1950's – 1970's housing estates. These were designed with pleasant green spaces amongst properties, highway and garages, but were not designed for the number of cars now often owned by modern households.

Verge parking not only reduces the verge to an unsightly state, it can also obstruct the highway and prevent pedestrians and wheel chair users from accessing roads and footways if there is no other route. Verge parking can also cause a hazard to other motorists, especially if the vehicle is parked on a bend, narrow road or junction. The Council does not condone parking on grass verges.

Parking restrictions marked on the carriageway also relate to the highways verge. Therefore any regular parking on a highway verge that is protected by parking restrictions (i.e. yellow lines on the road next to the verge) should be reported to the Council for subsequent inclusion within parking enforcement patrols.

Many highway verges are not protected by parking restrictions and in these circumstances a proportionate view will be taken on the options available. Actions can include steps to protect verges from parking damage (as opposed to parking restrictions) but this can be costly to install and maintain.

Key action

The Council will consider parking restrictions where verge parking has been deemed to be a road safety issue

Resident Parking Scheme

All vehicles parked in the defined zones (apart from delivery vehicles or street works contractors) need to display a permit during the scheme's hours of operation. The key aims of the trial are to protect residents from increased parking pressures arising from the town centre regeneration and not to simply reserve the highway simply for the residents. The scheme is enforced by the Council's parking attendants.

Permits are issued for use by residents, their visitors and other essential users of the streets. Vehicles not displaying a valid permit during the hours of operation are not legally allowed to park. This aims to ensure that additional parking demand does not prevent local residents from parking on-street where they have little other choice.

Key action

The Council will consider the expansion of the Residents Parking Scheme to other areas of the Borough where evidence demonstrates that non-residential Depending on the results of the trial, the council will look to expand the Resident Parking Scheme to other areas of the

Borough where residents need protection from increased non-residential parking pressures exist and that benefits can be provided to residents within a self funded scheme

Residential Parking Bays for Disabled People

Residents who hold blue disabled badges, and meet certain other criteria, can apply to the Council for a disabled bay near their home (see www.bracknellforest.gov.uk/disabledpeopleparkingbays).

Applications are reviewed on a six monthly basis with the approved spaces being formalised via a Traffic Regulation Order. The making of an Order allows the Council to enforce the restrictions via its Civil Enforcement Officers. These disabled persons' bays can be used by any valid blue badge holder and assist those in need to park close to their home. The Council installs approximately thirty such spaces each year. Periodically the council also removes disabled parking spaces when it has been made aware that there is no further need with in the community they serve.

Key action

The Council will continue to provide new residential disabled parking bays where the needs based criteria is met, and remove redundant bays to maximise parking capacity

On-street parking restrictions

The introduction of parking restrictions can have positive benefits for residents, retailers and businesses. The Council introduces waiting restrictions in response to obstruction or safety issues that have been brought to its attention by residents or other parties. Following notification of a concern, Council Officers will normally visit the area in question several times to establish the nature of the issue. In appropriate cases a parking restriction scheme will be drawn up to alleviate the observed issues. This will take account of parking needs in the area.

The Traffic Regulation Orders for waiting restrictions are usually processed in groups every six months. They can vary from simple double yellow lines at junctions to more significant schemes for entire estates. The Council installs on average ten new parking restriction schemes each year. Every new waiting restriction is subject to a statutory process in which the public is consulted and their views considered before a decision is made by the executive member of the Council.

Key action

The Council will continue to implement new on-street parking restriction schemes to address evidence based road safety and / or highway obstruction issues

Dropped kerbs to off-street parking

The Council helps provide dropped kerbs for residents who have sufficient frontage to have a driveway installed and where highway safety will not be adversely affected. There may also be circumstances where it will not be acceptable to agree a dropped kerb, for example, within a conservation area, where on-plot parking may be harmful to the character of the area, or where the property has sufficient off road space for a larger vehicle. The Council helps by inspecting the property, providing a quotation, and installing the works at the resident's cost if they wish to proceed. Further information and advice on how to apply for a dropped kerb on an unclassified road can be found at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/vehicleaccesskerbs.

Dropped kerbs can reduce parking congestion and highway safety in estate roads by removing vehicles parked on streets. They can also help by increasing overall parking capacity where the road alongside the dropped kerb can be parked on by the occupiers of the dwelling or their visitors.

Key action

Subject to highways safety and other planning considerations, the Council will support the installation of new dropped kerbs to enable off-street parking in residential streets

Commercial vehicle parking

There are rules and regulations in place regarding the parking of commercial vehicles on the public highway whether or not there is a residents parking scheme. Certain commercial vehicles require a Goods Vehicle Operators Licence. Any vehicle meeting the criteria for such a licence is required to be stored in an 'operating centre' (depot / storage yard) and therefore should not be parked on the public highway (residential or otherwise) when not in use as this would be in breach of the conditions of an operator's licence. If the vehicle meets any of the following criteria then it requires an operator's licence:

- A gross plated weight of more than 3.5 tonnes: or
- If it has no gross plated weight, an unladen (empty vehicle) weight of more than 1525kg.
- Recovery vehicles are exempt to these rules.

The Traffic Commissioner for the area, who is responsible for granting operator licences, has the power to remove the operating licence which is the ultimate sanction to control the use of such vehicles in residential areas.

The goods vehicle operators licencing rules do not generally apply to 'Transit' or 'Luton' (box van) sized vehicles as the majority of these, either standard or longer (long wheel base versions) vehicles, have a 'gross vehicle weight' that is 3.5 tonnes or less and therefore do not meet the criteria for requiring a licence.

Key action

The Council will continue to assess new requests for operating centres are fit for purpose and that surrounding parking impacts are considered

Work with VOSA on issues where a breach of the licence requirements is identified

Enforcement

The Council introduced civil parking enforcement (CPE) in 2006 across the whole borough, with the exception of certain high speed roads, which enables the local traffic authority to carry out enforcement of parking restrictions. The CPE service is provided by a specialist third party contractor, with management support and direction provided by the Council's own parking services team.

A network and system of parking restrictions exists in and around many of the town and village centres in Bracknell Forest, which are all supported by the CPE service. The parking services team also manage the Council's multi-storey and other off-street parking facilities.

The Council's approach to Parking will be implemented through a Parking Strategy and Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document. The SPD covers residential and commercial parking, and sets out standards and specifications for parking in new and existing development.

Key action

The Council will continue to enforce both on and off street restrictions with a primary focus on operating efficient off-street parking facilities and the prevention of safety or obstruction issues on the highway network

Delivering Change

Implementation

The implementation of this strategy will require a partnership approach bringing together colleagues with responsibility for planning, data collection, modelling, design and engineering.

In addition, there are a range of stakeholders to be consulted with who have an important role to play if the strategy is to be successful including local members, Parish Councils, neighbourhood groups and residents.

The following will be of particular importance:

- Through engagement and education, particularly with regard to school and business travel plans, to discourage inconsiderate parking, and promote sustainable travel.
- Introduction of new parking controls and schemes relies on funding being allocated for parking initiatives, but there are many calls on the limited funding available. Alternatively funding for new parking controls could be made available through the Community Infrastructure levy, or working with other relevant partners and stakeholders.

All parking schemes will be appraised to allow us to take account of the wider policy goals and practical deliverability that an individual scheme or plan (or combination of projects), will provide in supporting Bracknell Forest council's overall vision and objectives. These schemes are then taken forward as part of the overall Capital Programme.

Transport improvements featured within the overall programme are key to facilitating existing and future development within the Borough and thus contribute to the growth agenda

Funding

Funding sources for the delivery of the preferred strategy will be drawn from:

- LTP capital funding
- Revenue funding; and,
- Other funding sources, including development funding and potential opportunities presented by future central Government grants or challenge competitions

To further support this the authority has, in recent years, secured additional funds from central government towards more strategic schemes aimed at unlocking growth. Therefore in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and to help achieve economic growth and bring forward stalled developments, the Local Authority will continue to work proactively to help meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. This means the cost of these works are now trying to be met by the local authority with a mix of Capital and developer contributions

To date the Transport Development team has helped implement over £20m worth of transport improvements aimed achieving economic growth and bringing forward stalled developments such Warfield and the Town Centre regeneration.

Much of this funding has been secured through Government Initiatives such as the Local Pinch Point Programme and the Local Growth Fund with the Authority providing a local contribution towards the scheme through a combination of Borough capital and developer 106 contributions.

Monitoring

Monitoring progress will be an important part of ensuring that the objectives of the strategy are being met. There are a range of publically available data sources and data routinely collected by the Council which will be used to provide a measure of our progress. This data is used to inform Key indicators, annual progress reports, DfT returns, evidence in reports etc

The Annual Travel in Bracknell (TiB) report is an annual analysis of the changes in travel in and around the borough. Data are captured from a range of sources to inform on rail and bus use, cyclist and pedestrian movements, and traffic flow.

By reporting on changes in rail, bus, cyclist, pedestrian and vehicle travel, the Council can assess the progress they are making towards delivering on the vision outlined in the LTP:

“To develop a sustainable transport system that supports the local economy, provides choice, and improves quality of life in a safe and healthy environment”